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A CHAPLAIN'S EXPERIENCE  
IN THE UNION ARMY.

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BY REV. FREDERICK DENISON, A. M.,

[CHAPLAIN OF FIRST RHODE ISLAND CAVALRY AND THIRD RHODE ISLAND  
HEAVY ARTILLERY.]

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PERSONAL NARRATIVES  
OF EVENTS IN THE  
WAR OF THE REBELLION,  
BEING PAPERS READ BEFORE THE  
RHODE ISLAND SOLDIERS AND SAILORS  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

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[Chaplain of First Rhode Island Cavalry, and Third Rhode Island  
Heavy Artillery.]

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## A CHAPLAIN'S EXPERIENCE.

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THE purpose of this paper is to mention some of my experiences as an army chaplain during the Rebellion. So far as my knowledge extends no one has written specifically upon this line of army service, while, as I shall have occasion to show, there are matters of much public importance connected with chaplaincies.

By way of introduction, I may state that from 1838 to 1859 I served, at intervals, as my studies allowed, in the state militia of Connecticut, rising from the rank of a private in infantry to the post of brigade chaplain in that state, thus early becoming familiar with company, regimental, and brigade exercises. At the outbreak of the Rebellion I was chaplain of the Pawtucket Light Guard, in Pawtucket, R. I., a body of militia organized as a skeleton regiment. When Rhode Island called for troops to

take the field for the suppression of the Rebellion, I offered my services to the Second Rhode Island Regiment of Infantry, but found that another chaplain had just been chosen. I was afterwards elected chaplain of the First Rhode Island Cavalry (then First New England Cavalry), and, leaving my pulpit in Central Falls, in the autumn of 1861, entered the field with that command early in 1862, and served with it in Maryland and Virginia till January, 1863, when, on account of illness incurred by exposure, I was transferred to the Department of the South (South Carolina, Georgia and Florida), where I served with the Third Rhode Island Heavy Artillery till the expiration of that regiment's term of service. But few chaplains, if any, had larger experiences and opportunities for observation. I served under Colonels Lawton, Sayles, Duffié, Metcalf and Brayton, and Generals Abercrombie, Banks, McDowell, Pope, McClellan, Burnside, Hooker, Hunter, Gillmore, and Foster. I necessarily became acquainted with many chaplains. During the war there were about two thousand volunteer chaplains serving about two million volunteer soldiers. The service they

rendered calls for some special mention and special study.

Not only have chaplains usually accompanied regiments to the field in accordance with the provisions of military law, but they have always been much desired by the soldiers. Men do not become irreligious and faithless by joining an army and marching out to mortal fray. Rather, as a rule, and especially among volunteers, their deepest religious convictions are intensified and their manhood is heightened. Being called to stand as a shield for the right and to face death for great principles, they desire the purest, highest, strongest inspirations of religion. They instinctively court the guidance and protection of God. This was specially true in our Union army.

From large observation I can testify that soldiers have a high regard for devoted and faithful chaplains. Gratefully do I record the fact that I received every mark of regard and confidence that a chaplain could desire. I know that soldiers, though often jocose and seemingly blunt in speech, have great tenderness of heart and are open to the highest hopes and aims of our imperishable natures. In general, no class

of men exceeds them in the elements of manhood and a recognition of divine relations. This certainly may be said of the great majority of those who volunteered to enter the Union army during the first two years of the war. Men who enlisted for bounties were of a different moral grade. But even these at times desired the services of chaplains. As a general fact, the Union army was pervaded by a deep religious spirit. Officers and men felt, as did the people of the North and West, that it was a duty they owed to God as well as to mankind to uphold our free institutions and defend the republic. There was no fanaticism or rant in the army, but there was a genuine and strong religious faith that prompted to the noblest sacrifices and deeds.

According to the *Army Regulations* chaplains are enrolled as staff officers and hold the rank of captains of cavalry. As to their specific duties the *Regulations* are almost silent, leaving them to be determined by circumstances and the will of commanding officers. In a cantonment or single regular camp, a place is assigned the chaplain as to his tent and his place on parade and in review. He moves regularly with the staff.

To quote the *Regulations*, the chaplain is "appointed by the colonel on the nomination of the company commanders," and "the wishes and wants of the soldiers of the regiment shall be allowed their full and due weight in making the selection." None but regularly ordained ministers of some Christian denomination, however, shall be eligible to appointment." They were duly commissioned by the states from which the regiments came.

It was taken for granted that the chaplain would assist the surgeon and the hospital corps in taking care of the sick and wounded, while his specific duty was to minister in religious concerns, and conduct all services of worship. It was also accepted as a proper matter that he should serve his regiment as postmaster.

Unfortunately the *Regulations* are silent in regard to the chaplain's uniform and equipment. Most of the chaplains in the service wore no arms whatever, and generally they dressed in black suit, cut somewhat after a clerical and somewhat after a military pattern — a cross between the garb of a priest and that of a captain, and without army buttons. In

fact they were variously dressed and wore various kinds of hats and caps. I chose a complete captain's uniform with staff shoulder straps of my rank, and wore cap, sash, belt, and sword, the sword being of the rapier pattern. I had also a full patterned captain's overcoat. Why I was thus uniformed and armed will appear hereafter. Being for the time unmistakably of the church militant I also carried a seven-barreled revolver. The chaplain of Berdan's sharpshooters carried a rifle and was as good a shot as could be found in that famous regiment, and was severely wounded on the front in Virginia while supporting his command.

It was certainly a mistake that the uniform and arms of chaplains were not laid down by military regulations. So far as outward appearance was concerned, it was sometimes difficult to distinguish chaplains from sutlers or civilians. No reason exists why a chaplain in war time should not be distinguishable by his dress, like any other officer; nor why he should not be prepared to act upon the defensive. Surgeons, quartermasters, adjutants, and all aids wear arms. Why should not chaplains? If they

exhort men to fight, why not fight themselves, if they have a chance? Chance they can have if they keep with their commands. Unhappily in most cases during the war, being unarmed they were not found on the extreme front. Still the actual duties they performed were many and important, though they were not found in line of battle. Usually in times of action they were aiding in furnishing supplies for the front and in caring for the wounded, sick, and dead. Yet always they labored under this serious impediment and discouragement that there was no specific place in line of service assigned them, while all other officers had definite places and duties. But more on this point hereafter.

I come now to the mention of some of my experiences. In giving these, of course I give much that was common to chaplains in general, and so I illustrate the kind of service of which I am treating. My service began early in the autumn of 1861, under Col. G. W. Hallett, in Camp Hallett, in Cranston, R. I., with the First Battalion of the First New England Cavalry (afterwards the First Rhode Island Cavalry). While here, where the troops were being

organized and drilled, I conducted regular religious services on Sabbaths, supplied the soldiers with reading matter, acted as postmaster and aided in securing camp comforts. When the three battalions came together at Camp Arnold, near Pawtucket, under Col. Robert B. Lawton, I continued the same kind of service with additional duties in the camp hospital. Here I wrote a series of army hymns which were published by certain benevolent citizens of Providence, such as Dea. William J King, Mr. Amasa Manton, and Mr. Ansel D. Nickerson, of Pawtucket, for the use of our regiment, and other commands that entered the field. These twelve or more hymns were in 16mo form and were pasted into the soldiers' pocket Bibles. Nearly all the men were also supplied with *Cromwell Soldiers' Pocket Bible*. Here occurred our first death by disease and my first service in an army funeral. It was while serving in Camp Arnold that certain officers of the Pawtucket Light Guard, under the leadership of Gen. Olney Arnold, presented to me my belt, sword, and gauntlets.

My open field service began early in 1862, imme-

dately on the arrival of our regiment in Washington, D. C., where I volunteered to accompany Gov William Sprague and a detachment of sixty men of our command under Capt. J. J. Gould, to push out to the Bull Run battle-field, then seven miles beyond the Federal front, to rescue the bodies of Rhode Island officers who fell on that field in July, 1861. On our way out, by stress of storm, we halted at Centreville, where I gave a short address in an abandoned church, and again halted a few moments at Sudley church, where from the pulpit appropriate passages of Scripture were recited. I recollect repeating the passage, "Thou shalt proclaim liberty throughout all the land to all the inhabitants thereof," which some of the men even then thought to be prophetic, and which proved to be so in respect to Mr. Lincoln's proclamation issued during that year. I assisted in gathering out of the ashes the bones of Maj. Sullivan Ballou, whose body the rebels had exhumed, and beheaded and burned. After this expedition we were immediately called to take the front. We moved out from Washington to Warrenton Junction, where without tents we suffered severely from snow, rain, cold wind,

and deep mud. From this exposed and painful bivouac I wrote home to our daily papers to secure donations of socks, comforters, and cavalry mittens. Before leaving Rhode Island I had so described these one-fingered mittens, and the manner of knitting them, that the patriotic women soon sent us a supply. I deemed it a part of my duty to care for the bodily comfort of our men. I remember that my servant, John Harris, made reconnaissances on my horse and fell in with rebel chickens that I sent to our field hospital, where we had many sufferers.

I now became the correspondent of the regiment for our Rhode Island papers, and my letters were entitled "Notes By The Wayside." These letters brought the regiment into notice and secured many comforts. By means of these and a daily journal that I was careful to write and preserve, the history of the regiment, in no small part, during its first year of service, was afterwards prepared. In fact through all my service I kept a journal which proved to be of large service in writing the histories of the regiments I served, though the thought of such use of my entries did not enter my mind at the time. And

it has been a special satisfaction to me since the war that single entries in my journals have been the means of securing pensions to soldiers and their widows — in one case securing the back pay and pension to a widow for more than \$700.00. This leads me to remark that every regiment should have its chronicler. And who so well fitted for this task as the chaplain?

As my regiment was put upon the front as van guard, and for reconnaissance, scout, and skirmish duty, and so was frequently divided and constantly occupied, regular Sabbath worship was sometimes precluded, which left me to serve the command in other ways. I always continued with the headquarters. While Colonel Lawton remained with us less care was given to worship than afterwards when Lieutenant-Colonel Willard Sayles came into command. The latter was always careful to make arrangements, when possible, for Sabbath services. As to having religious services in the field, as a general fact much depended upon the disposition and will of the commander.

It was while under Lieutenant-Colonel Sayles that I thoroughly studied what were, and what ought to

be, a chaplain's duties and relations to a regiment in war time. There was no appointed or recognized place for him on a march, in a bivouac, or in a line of battle; he was a supernumerary, a kind of fifth wheel to a coach, being in place nowhere and out of place everywhere. Seeing this awkward and uncomfortable position and feeling it keenly, and wishing to have the moral support, in myself and from the regiment, of being on duty somewhere and somehow, I volunteered to serve Lieutenant-Colonel Sayles as an aid-de-camp. He readily accepted me as such, as he appreciated my previous nondescript situation. Thereafter I was at ease. Thus I was by his side when we bivouacked and when we marched over the mountains to contend with "Stonewall" Jackson in the Shenandoah Valley. While on marches I carried orders to different portions of the command. From Front Royal I was sent, by order of General McDowell, with dispatches to Washington, and from thence by the Secretary of War to Rhode Island to find Governor Sprague.

On the return of the regiment over the mountains we encamped, to refit, near Manassas Junction.

Here we always had regular and full religious services. Here, besides perfecting our postal arrangements, I aided in organizing more completely our regimental band of music and acted as treasurer for the regiment in supporting the band. Here I continued to act as an aid and carried reports to General McDowell.

When Col. Alfred N Duffié came into command of the regiment, being a Frenchman not thoroughly master of the English language, though a good French scholar and master of the cavalry arm of service, he was very glad to accept me as an aid and was anxious to have me always with him. I was also able to assist him in translating his French into idiomatic English, and in grammatically arranging his orders and reports. He employed my services as an aid very freely, and often called my pen into requisition. He was a Catholic, but of very liberal views, caring more for "the substance of doctrine" than for any particular forms and dogmas. He ordered the regiment, as such, to attend divine service every Sabbath when such service was possible, and told me to follow my convictions and methods in conducting

the worship. Of course these services were never of a denominational or ecclesiastical character, but simply and clearly Christian. On one occasion a Catholic soldier asked to be excused from service on the alleged ground that he was a Catholic and I was a Protestant. The Colonel replied : "You are a Catholic ; very well ; I am glad ; I am a Catholic ; I attend service ; I hear the chaplain ; he does not hurt me ; he will not hurt you ; you are not excused ; go to your place."

When we again took the front, in July, 1862, and led the left wing of the van in Pope's advance to the Rapidan, I always rode on the Colonel's immediate left, and in bivouac I rested near him. Very frequently I carried reports to McDowell and returned with orders. Here, as all along before, my uniform and arms were appropriate, and at first very many thought me to be a veritable captain. In preaching I always studied to adapt my address to the occasion. On the Sabbath before going into the battle of Cedar Mountain, as we knew that we were about to measure arms with the foe, I preached from the text "Father, save me from this hour ; but for this cause came I

unto this hour." Comrades often spoke of this discourse as helpful on the eve of that battle. As became the duty of an aid I was on the extreme front by the side of Colonel Duffié in the Cedar Mountain fight while our regiment held the skirmish line and took the enemy's first fire, and remained thus between the two armies for several hours.

A word may here be said in explanation of the fact that in hours of battle I was with my commander instead of being engaged in looking after the wounded. In our regiment we had a band of musicians who were a permanent detail in all times of action to care for the injured and bear them to the field hospital. Still I sometimes served somewhat in this work, but the Colonel always wished me by his side. In the Cedar Mountain battle I proposed to gallop up on the skirmish line to recover one of our wounded men. The Colonel forbade me on the ground that I would make myself a target for the enemy's bullets. On the morning of that battle, knowing that the struggle was at hand, we being then on the front, the Colonel gave me a written order pencilled on paper resting on my saddle skirt, as to the disposition of his body

in case he was killed. He promised to rescue my body in case I should fall. This piece of paper I cherish as it illustrates the relation and feeling existing between my commander and myself.

After we fell back from Cedar Mountain to the Flat Lands near Raccoon Ford, I returned with my servant to the battle-field to see that the dead of our regiment were buried, and did not leave till they were laid in the trench graves with the other loyal dead. The sight of that war-plowed field, a full mile in length and of about the same width, strewn with decaying bodies and the debris of battle will forever be with me. I am the only one of our command who saw the grave of Lieut. J. P. Taylor, and who can now identify the spot. He too had served as an aid in the battle and so sacrificed his life.

To better understand the temper of the old planters of Virginia and to discover the situation of affairs, the Colonel usually took me with him in visiting the plantation mansions, such as Mr. Bowen's near Rappahannock Station, and Mr. Wharton's near Mitchell's Station. Alone I visited the Kelly man-

sion at Kelly's Ford, and Mr Vaugh's on the Flat Lands. It required a little tact in cross examination to bring out the "true inwardness" of these old Virginians.

While on the Flat Lands in Culpepper County it fell to my lot to advise and pray with a deserter who had been sentenced to be shot. He had for the sake of bounties enlisted three times and deserted twice. During the night after his sentence, which was to be executed the next day, he was in great distress. I dealt with him plainly and faithfully as in the sight of God and not of men. Before morning I discovered marks of true penitence and evidence of a thorough change of disposition. I interposed for his pardon and secured it. He was ever after true to his pledge of reformation and loyalty to the service, and counted me as his true friend and benefactor.

What is known as Pope's campaign was one of great severity and hardships. We had little rest and scant rations for nearly four weeks, yet I managed to keep with the headquarters, and was by the side of the Colonel when we opened the battles of

Groveton and Chantilly. In leaving the battle-field of Groveton in the middle of the night I remained to see that every ambulance was as full as possible of the wounded. Many had to be left at last. On the morning of August 30th, the last day of the second Bull Run battle, while as an aid, accompanied only by my servant, on my way towards Centreville to seek supplies for our starving men, I had the fortune, near Cub Run, to pick up six full armed rebel soldiers of Jackson's corps, and to take them with me into our lines and hand them over to the provost, Capt. William H. Sterling, of the Seventh Ohio Infantry. Then I appreciated and found the full justification of my uniform and sword. The captives took me to be a captain of the line with a squad of cavalry at my heels. But for my special volunteer effort that resulted in securing supplies from Centreville, my regiment would have lacked rations on the last day of the Bull Run fight, when they had already been short of food for two days.

In this trying campaign when regiments were rapidly pushed to different places and points, and often mixed and broken, some chaplains lost their regi-

ments, or were lost from them, and were left to wander alone and bewildered in search for their commands. Some of these whom I met were in real distress and tearfully asked what they could do, as they learned that I always was with my regiment. I urged them to immediately study the duties of aids and volunteer in that office. They were good men, anxious to do their duty and serve the army, but the most of them had no military education at all and knew not how to assume the role I recommended. This was unfortunate for them and for their regiments, for soldiers never need the countenance and help of chaplains more than in days of forced marches and of battles. I am sure that, as a general thing, chaplains performed much important service in helping the wounded and in aiding the surgeons in their ministries to the sick in the hospitals. They were certainly very active and efficient in duty of this kind after the second Bull Run battle, when I remember to have counted about fifty four-horse ambulances in one train moving off the field loaded to their utmost capacity with the wounded that were utterly helpless, while all the injured that

could possibly walk were moving in lines by their side. Our regiment acted as rear guard in falling back from that bloody field.

While we were acting as rear-guard to Pope's army between Fairfax Court House and Alexandria I had occasion to appreciate the regard the regiment had for me. In a temporary halt, after the enemy had been checked, when we all were thoroughly exhausted, I swung from my saddle and fell asleep in a cluster of chincopin bushes. As the rebels again pressed upon us the regiment fell back in the darkness and I was left alone and asleep. The Colonel, on missing me, sent back a sergeant to search for me, and I was aroused just in time to escape a trip to Richmond. The exposures of the cavalry in those days were constant and great.

The only instance in which my regiment, as such, worshipped under a roof was in Poolesville, Md., Sept. 28, 1862, when we entered the churches of the town. At all other times we held our services in the open fields or in groves. In the regiment there was always the ability and the heart to maintain sacred song. I think the soldiers always had a true regard for religious worship.

During the march of the Army of the Potomac over the Bull Run mountains, in the autumn of 1862, under General McClellan, and afterwards under General Burnside, on account of rain, snow and fatigue, as we had no tents, many fell on the sick list, and myself among the number. I was therefore sent with a heavy train of such by rail from Warrenton to Washington. From thence I had a brief furlough to Rhode Island. On my return I brought to the regiment, then encamped near Falmouth, opposite Fredericksburg, various comforts from our home friends, such articles as mittens, comforters, caps, socks, flannels, books and papers.

But the space assigned to this paper will not allow a more extended mention of my large experiences in Virginia. On account of reduced health, not wishing to leave the service till the rebellion was broken, I was transferred to the Department of the South, a milder region, to serve with the Third Rhode Island Heavy Artillery Regiment, in the Tenth Army Corps, then under Gen. David Hunter. I parted reluctantly with the gallant and devoted cavaliers with whom I had shared hard and important service.

In fact the cavalry was my favorite arm of the service.

But I was generously and very warmly received by the noble Third Regiment, in February, 1863, at Hilton Head, South Carolina, where several of the twelve companies were holding the entrenchments.

I took with me gifts of friends to the regiment, such as Testaments, books and papers; and also hundreds of copies of Army Hymns that I had written for the command, similar to those I wrote for the cavalry. Among the books were about three hundred copies of the Douay New Testament, obtained by solicitation from a wealthy Roman Catholic gentleman in New York city, for the use of the Catholic members of the regiment. This donation was a happy surprise and won for me at once the regards of the Catholics. Col. Edwin Metcalf, then in command of the regiment, rendered every possible facility for the furtherance of my duties; and all the officers were cordial and earnest in aiding me. Never can any of us forget the pleasant hours of worship, after parades, on the ample ground, within the strong and large entrenchments.

Usually our religious exercises were held in forts and entrenchments, always in the open air of course. Commonly they consisted of Scripture reading, prayer, song and a discourse. The singing was by the regiment. As these services usually followed a parade when we had the advantage of the music of the band and the presence sometimes of the wives of officers, our song was well sustained. I think these were in substance the services generally held by chaplains in all arms of the service. They were the same in Virginia. On board the naval vessels the Episcopal form of worship was commonly employed, but not always.

At different times the battalions and companies of our regiment were separated and sent to different parts of the department extending from Charleston, S. C., to the southern coast of Florida. I finally received a general pass from the generals commanding the department by which I moved, as duty called, from Morris Island to St. Augustine. The most of the regular services were held in the entrenchments and forts of Hilton Head, at Fort Pulaski, on Tybee Island, and on Morris Island. Occasionally I was present on the gunboats.

When I reached South Carolina President Lincoln's Proclamation of Emancipation had just gone into effect, and thousands of freedmen were found within our army lines. These were to me a great study. Shortly they began to give color to our military affairs. The First South Carolina Regiment of colored troops was being organized and drilled under Col. T. W. Higginson, the first regiment of the kind raised in our country and mustered into the service. I visited this regiment on Port Royal Island. The strong prejudice against this sort of troops that was at first manifested, especially in the regular army, was soon modified by the humorous logic of Colonel Halpine, "Miles O'Reilly," in his popular ballads, and by the good conduct of the troops themselves.

On Hilton Head the negroes were very numerous, and they worshipped within the entrenchments in a rude sort of chapel of their own construction. I sometimes preached for them and assisted them in other ways. Their religious leader was Abraham Murcherson, a man of ability and character, formerly a slave in Savannah, who could read somewhat, having stolen a knowledge of letters while in slavery.

He baptized more than a thousand of his people in Port Royal harbor. The camp or village of these freedmen, west of the entrenchments, was named Mitchelville in honor of their friend, Gen. O. M. Mitchel. There was something highly pleasing and exhilarating in their sacred music. As they rose up and swayed to and fro to keep time, their rich voices, full of tender and strong emotion, made sublime melodies that rose and fell like the rhythm of the sea. Their poetry of their own composition was quaint and rude. Commonly however, they used the hymns of the white people. They were all anxious to learn to read, and I assisted them as far as possible in their endeavors, by books, paper and pencils. In the meantime, both at Hilton Head and Fort Pulaski, I wrote out near forty of their peculiar original songs—rude ballads and refrains, half sacred and half secular; an odd mixture indeed. These, now found in my army journal, in years to come, will be deemed historically valuable as the reliques and reminders of southern slavery.

Gen. Rufus Saxton was appointed military governor of South Carolina and issued orders relative to the

legal marriage of freedmen, and also established at Beaufort, Port Royal, a savings bank for such as might have money to be safely kept. I aided General Saxton in carrying out the marriage laws, solemnizing the contracts and giving the parties certificates of their union and keeping the records. Copies of these certificates are now found in my journal. Some of the marriages were amusing. Under the old slave system, as I found, in regard to marriage, the slaves were treated shamefully; it was really a mockery and only brutalizing.

I became well acquainted with two remarkable negroes of large native ability; Robert Smalls, who ran the rebel steamer *Planter* out of Charleston in the night and became captain of the steamer in the Federal service, a well poised, gentlemanly, able, energetic man; and March Haynes, who escaped from Savannah and was employed by General Gillmore in secret service, a pure, shrewd, brave efficient man, who kept us informed of affairs within the enemy's lines. On one of his expeditions Haynes was severely wounded, and I visited him in the hospital. He too learned to read while a slave, acting as a stevedore in Savannah.

While at Hilton Head, the headquarters of the Department of the South, as Chaplain Hudson was sick one Sabbath morning, General Hunter sent for me, with only a half-hour's notice, to preach at the headquarters before him, his staff and other officials. I distinctly recollect that I preached upon the great and universal law of sacrifice from the text, " Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone; but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit." The general thanked me very heartily for the service.

At different times I officiated at Fort Pulaski; once for a number of weeks in succession when there were about seven hundred soldiers of various regiments in and around the fort drilling and preparing for the front. Here my duties were varied and full of interest. The regular services were held in the fort on the parade. Occasionally meetings were held outside in the hospital and in the quarters occupied by the blacks. Among the troops here were several hundred Catholics. Gen. Gillmore was a Catholic, and encouraged several priests to enter the department. With two of these I could

not affiliate on account of their love of drink, and I did not consent to have them officiate where I was post chaplain. When I visited St. Augustine, I learned that the priest who there officiated in the cathedral was a pure, devout, able man. Therefore when he came up the coast I urged him to spend a few days with me at the fort and hold such Catholic services as the men desired and as he thought best, explaining to him that I was a Protestant who both believed and preached the doctrine of perfect religious liberty, and that while I might not join in all his services, he should have time and place, as should the soldiers, by consent of the commandant, Maj. J. E. Bailey, for his desired exercises. He was surprised by my liberality and heartily accepted my invitation, and remained several days till he had met, in a double casemate and in their quarters, all the Catholics of the post. For this course some of the Protestant chaplains in the department were disposed to criticise me, but the Catholics were pleased and benefited.

In the meetings I held among the blacks, often assisted by Surgeon J. W. Grosvenor, I explained

portions of Scripture, as but few of them could read. They often desired to hear the story of Daniel in the den of lions, the three worthies in the fiery furnace, and like vivid portions of the Bible. Some of them would exhort and pray with remarkable fervor. Here I learned to estimate the character and worth of March Haynes as he lay wounded.

While at Fort Pulaski a curious fortune befell me on this wise. Capt. J. C. Chaplin, commander of the naval steamship *Dai-Ching*, lying off the mouth of the Savannah, visiting the fort, was introduced to me. His curiosity was excited by my name. When his ship lay in the Potomac in 1862, he heard of my luck in bringing in six rebel soldiers. On inquiring of Major Bailey he found I was that chaplain. Immediately he repeated his greetings in complimentary phrase. In a few days I was invited on board his ship with such post officers as I might select, and boats were ordered to convey the party. We had a splendid reception on board the ship. One of the ship's officers, in behalf of the other officers and men, in a very fine, patriotic speech presented to me a beautiful United States

flag, made on board, of best bunting, mounted on a staff with halyards and surmounted by a truck and metal star. I had some difficulty in making a proper reply. Then followed various speeches and abundant hospitalities. That flag was ever after used by me to drape the coffins of soldiers at their burial. It was also at times used as a headquarters flag on expeditions up the river and among the islands. On one of these expeditions it received some injury. I now cherish it as a precious memorial of the war.

Our chief places for the burial of our dead soldiers in the Department of the South were outside of the entrenchments, to the south, on Hilton Head, on the north side of the demilune at Fort Pulaski, in the cemetery at Beaufort, and on the south end of Morris Island.

In a portion of my quarters in the gorge wall of Fort Pulaski I fitted up and furnished a very respectable reading-room for war times. Here the soldiers, when not on duty, met, especially in the evenings, for study. Here also they met at times to practice sacred music for our regular worship.

With my consent, to whom the matter was referred by the commandant of the fort, the men instituted a series of concerts and a species of theatricals more comic than classical. These were practiced in a room near the magazine, and for a time were very popular as they broke the monotony of garrison life in the evenings. I always regarded an innocent laugh as a kind of tonic for soldiers. Heaven knows we had serious hours enough.

I also served my regiment as assistant allotment commissioner of Rhode Island, for safely sending home, at the expense of the State, moneys of the officers and men ; and in this office, that demanded time, labor, and care, I transmitted without the loss of a cent, more than a hundred thousand dollars. On my being called upon to handle bounty certificates, I discovered certain tricks and frauds of certain bounty brokers and swindlers. I refused to be a party to these transactions and exposed the rascalities. This drew down upon me the maledictions and threats of the swindlers, and for my firm conduct I for a time suffered the displeasure of the governor of Rhode Island who had been deceived

by the acts of the knaves. The fight was quite sharp. I persisted and saved the State and the soldiers thousands of dollars. The legislature of the State finally supported my proceedings. I regarded it as my duty to defend the soldiers from northern enemies as well as from southern rebels.

One day, as assistant allotment commissioner on Morris Island, I received from officers and men allotted moneys, amounting to over fifteen hundred dollars, and, as we all were constantly under fire, I felt anxious for the security of the money. Not being able to pass to the rear when it came night, I called Maj. George Metcalf and pointing out to him a fine bunch of rice grass said to him that before I laid down I would bury the money on the south side of that grass bunch, and if, during the night, a rebel shot should muster me out I wished him to unearth the funds and send them to Allotment Commissioner Smith, in Rhode Island. But I wore my head till morning and sent the money north.

Perhaps my comrades of the Third Regiment will expect me to mention a matter which they were the first to make public by causing it to be published in

*The New South*, a little newspaper printed at Hilton Head. Our commander had wisely prohibited gambling, and kept his eye on every violation of the order. In this order all the officers stood with him. One night, in the entrenchments, as I could not sleep, and was walking the parade at a late hour, I discovered a light in a tent at the extreme of a company street. Supposing some one must be sick to justify a light at that hour, I moved down towards the tent. On approaching it I heard voices that did not indicate distress, and by pausing and listening I learned that the boys were playing cards for something beyond mere amusement. One voice cried out "Who will go it?" "Who will go it?" A not unhappy thought came to me as suited to the occasion. I slipped my hand into my left breast pocket and took out my copy of the New Testament that I usually carried, and throwing back the tent front entered with a smile on my face and perhaps a mischievous look, and laying the Testament on the cards and the money, said cheerfully, "I've got it, boys," and instantly withdrew. In a twinkling the lights were

out, and the boys scattered. Naturally they expected I would report the affair to our commander, but I never mentioned the matter to a single soul until the boys themselves gave the story away to the editor of *The New South*, since they said it was too good to keep. My treatment of the case, it was asserted by the boys, effectually killed gambling for the future, and some have told me that since that time they have never been able to even play cards without seeing that New Testament appear on the scene.

There is a way of doing good without giving offence. Once sitting at the mess table by the side of a brave but rough lieutenant, who had an unfortunate habit of making remarks to himself which would be disrespectful if applied to the Supreme Being, as the officer thoughtlessly enjoyed this form of speech, I nudged him lightly and whispered, "Draw it mild, lieutenant." He received the suggestion kindly and thanked me years afterwards, and a little time before his death in Woonsocket, he again mentioned the matter and said that he never afterwards allowed this habit to lead him astray without hearing the suggestion, "Draw it mild."

When a company of exchanged prisoners from the infamous Andersonville prison reached our lines and were landed at Hilton Head I assisted in caring for them. They were in a ragged, emaciated, wretched condition. Among them was Chaplain H. S. White, of the Fifth Rhode Island Regiment, whom I immediately took to my quarters and furnished with clean and civilized raiment and other comforts. The stories of these prisoners, supported by their personal condition, were sufficient to brand the rebels with eternal infamy.

This mention of prisoners reminds me that when I learned that the Confederates had put a large number of captured Federal officers under the fire of our guns in Charleston to save the city, and among them were some officers of the First Rhode Island Cavalry and others that I had known in Virginia, I procured and sent to them boxes of cooking utensils, clothes, and other comforts. In doing this I had a sharp war of words with the rebel officer of exchange. I gave him to understand that his refusal to receive and deliver the articles would be published to the world as a specimen of Southern chivalry. He

wisely yielded. By the way, to meet the barbarity of putting our officers under fire, we prepared a stockade here on Morris Island and put a like number of rebel officers under the fire of the rebel guns. This step ended the barbaric game.

My duties on Morris Island during the bombardment of Fort Sumter and the city of Charleston were numerous and onerous. At times I was the only chaplain on the island, and was therefore called to officiate for different regiments in Sabbath services and the burial of their dead. Here, too, came some duties in the field hospital and some coöperation with the devoted agents of the Sanitary Commission and the Christian Commission, whose ministries to the soldiers on the front in action and to the suffering in the hospitals were of great value. So greatly did we prize the labors of these volunteers and active commissions that our regiment finally put into the treasury of the Sanitary Commission one thousand dollars out of our post fund. Of these beneficent commissions, and the volunteer female nurses in the hospitals who came from the North, some of them from the most favored

and affluent families, it would be difficult to speak in too high terms of praise.

I recall our worship one Sabbath when in the midst of my discourse a sixty-four pound shell came over from Fort Moultrie and, plunging into the sand, near the musicians on the right of the line, exploded and gave us a nice shower of sand, but did not interrupt our exercises or mar the thread of my discourse.

I was sometimes sent along the coast on special duties to facilitate postal arrangements. I recollect my running down from Charleston to Hilton Head on a navy dispatch steamer whose captain had a habit of drinking even when he was not thirsty. Anxious to do the polite thing and seeing me well uniformed as a staff captain, he invited and urged me to share his inspiriting hospitality, and was well nigh indignant at my refusal, though I courteously explained that I never used that sort of reinforcement. He seemed to think I lacked the qualities of an officer. I speak of this to indicate some of the temptations that beset army and navy life.

It fell to my fortune once to be put in charge of a

squad of rebel prisoners, captured on the Savannah River, to take them to Hilton Head. When the men were delivered to me they said they had given up all their arms, but I had my suspicions, and before I allowed the steamer to leave the wharf I had them examined and found on them several slung-shots and a five barreled revolver. Naturally I chose to confiscate these warlike implements much to the disappointment of the prisoners whom I safely delivered to the provost at Hilton Head.

During the war certain officers of the regular army in Washington, not having too much grace in their hearts, or good purposes in their heads for chaplains, sprung through Congress a law cutting off the pay of chaplains when they were absent from their regiments or posts. On learning of this, and seeing that chaplains who were sick, or wounded, or prisoners, were cut off as to pay, I took counsel with Chaplain H. L. Wayland, from Connecticut, and others, and wrote a letter to Hon. Lafayette S. Foster, of the Senate, who laid my communication before Hon. Henry Wilson, Chairman of the Committee on Military Affairs. When

my letter, spreading out the facts of the case, and the condition of certain wounded and captured chaplains was stated before Congress, the evil legislation was at once repealed and the old law was restored.

From over-work and loss of sleep on the Charleston expedition and in hurrying to the relief of our men who were injured in the destruction of the gun-boat *Washington*, I was prostrated by my old army disease and carried to the General Hospital on Hilton Head, and was finally sent North for a few months to recuperate. In returning, on board the large transport *Fulton*, under Captain Fulton, we had a remarkably pleasant Sabbath, when, by request of the captain, I preached on the ship's deck to a congregation of near six hundred soldiers and civilians. My text was, "Without faith it is impossible to please God." The singing of this company on the sea in war times was something inspiring. And during the sermon a land bird, that had been driven to sea, lighted on the starboard arm of the main yard and sang like a little seraph, and to which I pointed, thus illustrating the text of faith in God. All hearts felt the lesson.

I might speak in great praise of certain chaplains in the Department of the South, particularly of Rev. H. L. Wayland, of the Seventh Connecticut, and Chaplain H. C. Trumbull, of the Tenth Connecticut. The latter accompanied a night attack on Fort Sumter and was captured.

My experiences in five of the rebel states, and my large acquaintance with the national troops from nearly all the loyal states, enables me to speak correctly, I think, of the disposition and feelings of the opposing armies, a matter about which many have had curious and erroneous opinions. Our soldiers were animated by principles, not passions ; by patriotism, not party zeal ; by loyalty to the republic, not a theory ; by regard for the rights of all and the life of the nation, not revenge or retaliation. The Confederates had less of great principles and more of party spirit and passion ; they hated the views of the North and hugged State sovereignty and slavery ; while they were brave and zealous they were often, to their prisoners, harsh and cruel ; they fought for themselves and not for humanity.

But enough. I have mentioned these facts and

incidents to illustrate the nature and kind of services rendered by chaplains, and have indicated the relation of these services to the welfare of the army and the nation. Some chaplains did all they could under the circumstances. All might have done more if the *Army Regulations* had been different—more full and definite as to place and duties.







